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Housekeepers' Chat

Friday, March 7, 1930

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "A Guide to Good Meals for the Young Homemaker." Approved by
Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "A Guide to Good Meals for the Junior Homemaker."

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The other day some one wrote to me, for advice on planning meals.

"Is it possible," she asked, "for the average homemaker to get reliable, practical information about planning meals? I don't know a great deal about vitamins and calories and so forth, but I want to learn. Will you help me?"

Yes indeed. I'm sending you a copy of a leaflet written by the Menu Specialist-- she ought to know what she's writing about, having planned several hundred meals for her radio followers. The title of this leaflet is "A Guide to Good Meals for the Junior Homemaker." Are there any junior homemakers listening-in, this morning? And would you like to know more about balanced meals, and so forth?

It has been a long time since we have discussed meal-planning. Let's review our lesson this morning, before we write the menu and recipes. Does anybody remember the definition for meal-planning? It's a very good definition to keep in our notebooks: Meal-planning is combining the five main groups of foods, in the right proportions, and in wholesome, attractive, and appetizing ways.

Of course, before we can combine the five main groups of foods, we must know what they are. It might be a good idea to write down these five main groups of foods, for future reference. Ready with your pencils?

Group I. Vegetables and fruits. Vegetables and fruits are rich in mineral matter, which we must have for bones, and teeth, and to keep the body in good working order. Fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, too, necessary for normal growth; and bulky material, which prevents constipation.

Group II includes the efficient-protein foods. Efficient-protein foods are milk, eggs, cheese, meats, poultry, fish, peanuts, soy beans, and so forth. All these foods contain protein. We call it "efficient protein" because it is used to build new tissues, and repair old tissues.

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Next, Group III. Group III includes the cereal foods -- rice, barley, wheat and corn, breakfast foods, hominy, flour, meal, bread, crackers, macaroni, even toast and biscuits. The starch in these foods is used as fuel. It keeps the body warm, and supplied with energy. Some of the cereals -- corn, for instance -- contain fat. Whole-grain cereals supply roughage, minerals, and vitamins.

Now we're ready for Group IV. Group IV includes sweets, which are also used as fuel. In this group we place sugar, honey, molasses, sirups, jellies, rich preserves, candy, and so forth. We need to guard against eating too much sweet food, especially before meals, or our appetites will be so dulled that we won't eat our proper share of other foods. Some dried foods, such as figs, raisins, prunes, and dates, might also be included in Group IV. They can often be used instead of other sweets, and they are valuable for the minerals they contain.

The last group -- Number V -- includes the fats and fat foods, such as butter, cream, lard, suet, table oils, salt pork, bacon, chocolate, and nuts. All these foods are used as fuel. Fats are the most concentrated of all the foods. Some fats, especially butter and cream, are sources of vitamins. Others, like chocolate, contain minerals.

The five main groups of foods, then, are: First, Vegetables and Fruits; second, Efficient-Protein Foods; third, Cereal Foods; fourth, Sweets; and fifth, Fats and Fat Foods. These five groups, combined in the right proportions, make what we call "well-balanced" meals.

And what do we mean by the "right proportions?"

As a general rule, Group I, or Vegetables and Fruits, should furnish one-fifth of the fuel our bodies need; Efficient-Protein foods, one-fourth; Cereal Foods, one-fourth; Sweets, only one-tenth; and Fats and Fat Foods, one-fifth. People who do very heavy muscular work, may need a larger proportion of the cereals, sweets, and fatty foods.

In planning the day's meals, it is not necessary that every meal include every group of foods, but each group should be represented in the daily diet.

And that's all, about planning meals, for today. I want you to hear about this Sunday dinner. It even has a pretty color scheme, with yellow and orange predominating. Notebooks ready? Here's the menu: Curried Chicken with Carrots; Flaky Boiled Rice; Buttered Asparagus; Orange Salad, and Apricot Whip.

Here's the recipe for Curried Chicken with Carrots -- eight ingredients, please:

4 pound fowl	Flour
1-1/2 teaspoons salt	1/2 cup sliced onion
2 tablespoons fat	1/4 teaspoon curry powder, and
1 quart water	2 cups shredded carrots, cooked.

Eight ingredients, for Curried Chicken with Carrots: (Repeat).

Disjoint the fowl. Flour the pieces, and brown in the fat. Then transfer to a kettle, and simmer in the water to which 1 teaspoon of salt has been added. When the fowl is tender, drain off, and measure the liquid. For each cup of liquid, blend 2 tablespoons of flour, with 2 tablespoons of fat, removed from the top of the broth. Brown the onion in a small amount of the chicken fat, and add the broth, the blended flour and fat. Cook until thickened, add the curry, the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt, the chicken, and the cooked carrots. Heat through, and serve with flaky boiled rice. If desired, serve grated fresh coconut to sprinkle over the curried chicken.

Now, isn't that a company dish? Let's check the menu again: Curried Chicken with Carrots; Flaky Boiled Rice; Buttered Asparagus -- of course this will be canned asparagus for most of us; Orange Salad; and Apricot Whip.

There's a recipe for Apricot Whip in the Egg leaflet, in case you want to know. But I'm not advertising the egg leaflet today, because I want you to send for the leaflet, "A Guide to Good Meals for the Junior Homemaker."

Another menu on Monday.

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